

RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

Wyoming Board of Agriculture
May 25, 2011
Johnson County Library
Buffalo, Wyoming

Present: Jana Ginter
Shaun Sims, President
John Moore
Alison Lass
Bryan Brost
Patrick Zimmerer
John Hansen, Vice President
Bridget Williams
Dalin Winters
Jason Fearneyhough, Director

Absent: Jim Hodder
Jim Price, Jr.

Called to order by President Sims at 8:00 a.m. Introductions were made and roll was taken.

Minutes

Dalin Winters made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 11 and 12, 2011 meeting. The motion was second by John Hansen. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Dalin Winters made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 8, 2011 conference call meeting. The motion was second by John Hansen. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Update on the Wyoming Livestock Board

Dr. Jim Logan was on hand to talk about the hot issues they are dealing with. He said there are still two ranches under quarantine for Brucellosis and one is for bison. They requires two whole-herd tests before the quarantine can be lifted. Those are behind electric fencing so elk may be the only animal that can get in. The other cattle ranch has had 2 whole-herd negative testing. Following calving – if they test negative, the quarantine will probably be released. The management area has been expanded affecting over 100 ranchers. They are working on about 50 additional herd management area and they expect more requests. Identification is required for all sexually intact animals before leaving the area. The Livestock Board does recognize several different ways of identification. This change has come from other states saying they require this and so the Wyoming Livestock Board complied.

Tric – They are continuing to find several cases throughout the state. If a case is found, they are required to notify all neighbors. The Livestock Board is not requiring any testing on bulls. The producers are willing to have this done and would like to see a mandatory testing.

The Sheep Quality Assurance Panel met on Monday. They discussed whether the industry would support rules on common grazing and testing.

The offices of the Livestock Board have received over 300 calls in both the Riverton and Cheyenne offices on the Equine Herpes Virus. He said that Wyoming has never had this disease. We did have a neurologic syndrome of the disease in the Buffalo area and lost about 50 horses. There is not any sign of the disease in Wyoming that the Wyoming Livestock Board is aware of. Ten other states have had confirmed cases and 34 horses have died from the virus. Aerosol and blood contact is how it is spread and under the correct conditions the virus can survive a month.

Lincoln County Equine Issue

There are horses in Afton that were brought into the state illegally. The process of trying to legally take these horses and take care of them has been over a year. They are now trespassing on to others property. On Monday, the Lincoln County Sheriff's office and the Wyoming Livestock Board personnel seized 102 horses. They were all in bad shape and they are now at the Cheyenne Stockyards getting fed and taken care of.

Conservation District Business

A motion to accept the staff recommendations from Justin Williams for Laramie County Conservation District's final report due on April 30, 2011, which fulfills their contract requirement for Monitoring and outreach in the Crow Creek Watershed Project, was made by Dailin Winters. The motion was seconded by John Hansen. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

John Hansen made a motion to appoint Bob Davis to serve in the At-Large position to the Little Snake River Conservation District until the next general election. The motion was seconded by Alison Lass. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Rangeland Health Applications to be reconsidered

The Big Horn Conservation District application for Rangeland Health and the application from the Little Snake River Conservation District for Rangeland Health were not complete by the April 11 and 12, 2011 meeting of the Board when the other applications were reviewed and either granted or denied. The Board voted to give both applicants until May 15, 2011 to correct any deficiencies in their application. They also agreed to review the changes to the applications at their board meeting following the May 15, 2011 deadline. The information was presented to the members today for a decision to be made.

Big Horn Conservation District

Leanne reviewed the packet presented in the board book. She indicated the requirements were still not met by the 15th of May. The application was missing a landownership map the partners are still missing, and the project summary is still not complete. State Lands and BLM were not on board as partners. Page 2-9 is the letter Leanne sent to them noting what was missing. Shaun Sims noted that Leanne worked with Dallen several times and went above and beyond to get these documents done by May 15.

A motion made by Alison Lass that due to ongoing deficiencies the second review of the application submitted by the Big Horn Conservation District be denied. The motion was second by John Hansen. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Little Snake River Conservation District

Leanne reviewed the packet presented in the board book. She said the requirements were not met because the application does not align with monitoring on private lands. The ownership map was not included, and there are no signed partnership agreement forms that were received by May 15, 2011 from State Lands and BLM. She also said the information obtained using this program cannot be protected.

A motion made by Jana Ginter that due to ongoing deficiencies the second review of the application submitted by the Little Snake River Conservation District be denied. The motion was seconded by John Hansen. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Second RFP

The project has committed \$114,000 which leaves \$54,000 for the second round of grant requests. Leanne said the second round RFP should be ready to go out next week. If the deadline for the applications is July, 2011, the recommendations by Jason Fearneyhough should be to the Board for review at the August meeting at State Fair. It was noted that no monies can be given until the contract is fully executed and no funds can be spent until that time. Leanne said the benefit of doing the grant process this fall is that they can still do some ground truthing and some office work during the winter. The ending date can be a year or two down the road to allow for the monitoring. Leanne said she is trying to get most of the money committed so she can list them in the report to the legislature to help fund this program in the future. There is no time ending limit on these grants.

Dalin Winters made a motion to send the RFP out in the next couple of weeks with a deadline of July 15, 2011 for applications to be reviewed by the committee and recommended by Jason Fearneyhough, then to be reviewed by the Board at the August 19, 2011 meeting. The motion was seconded by Alison Lass. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Western Watershed has requested information about the program, MOU and any other information on the program. Shaun said they are also requesting those applications that have been approved.

Jason said Director Simpson said he would like to have this program be well known that it is a program of the Department of Agriculture and not the BLM.

Meeting Schedule

John Hansen made a motion to change the conference call scheduled for October 11 to be a face-to face meeting in Laramie October 12 and then attend the AgriFuture October 12, 13, and 14. The motion was seconded by Bryan Brost. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Media Training

Derek presented a draft letterhead he had designed for the members to review. It was suggested to combine the youth members with the board, make the Dean of the University of Wyoming and the Governor's office ex-officio. Jason suggested moving Governor Mead's name to the top with the Chairman's name next to Governor's name. It was also noted to change the email to the recording secretary. Derek will make changes and get another draft out soon.

Derek asked the members to complete a survey so he can prepare biographies for media purposes. He then gave a power point presentation explaining the various aspects of dealing with the media and the various types of media in today's market. He talked to the members about talking with the media and how to direct the interview using a few points the member thinks are important messages to get out to the public through the interview.

John Moore is going to the Beef Council meeting and the WSGA. Patrick's wine received a gold medal for their cowgirl blush and their mead won a silver metal. Shaun attended the ADMB meeting where they distributed the funding to the local PAB's. They will be reviewing the research funding grants June 9th in Thermopolis.

Updates

Jason joined a contingent from Wyoming that visited with folks in Washington DC. They discussed the possibility of paying incentive payments to those landowners willing to enhance the black-footed ferret population's habitat. They would be paying for encouraging the prairie dog on their property, which is a major food source for the ferret. They need 500,000 acres to make the ferret sustainable. His concern is that the payment is (assurances) and where the funding comes from. He does not want EQIP money used for funding this program. Jason feels that WDA needs to participate in all discussions and is treading very carefully because of the unspoken ramifications.

Budget Review

Dalin discussed the current budget to the members.

Living Legacy Program. Muff explained the program and asked the members to find sponsorship for this year. She said there are 3 or 4 tree application but no sponsorship for the year.

John Henn, the Meat Marketing Coordinator with the Wyoming Business Council was on hand to talk about the Ag Source Verification Program. 210 producers are currently enrolled in the Ag Source Verification program. The tag from this program does qualify for the identification tag in cattle from the surveillance area.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m. for a working lunch with the Wyoming Business Council and a joint meeting to follow.

Meeting with The Wyoming Business Council

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Introductions were made by each member of the two boards.

Cindy Garretson-Weibel said there is nothing to update on the Torrington incubator but Cindy said as new information is available in the future, she would be happy to do an update later.

The 100 Cow Program is progressing. Cindy said they will actually be ready to talk about it at the WSGA next week. This program can provide an opportunity for young producers who are interested in

ranching to work with a rancher by providing them with a mentor and possibly an opportunity to buy into an operation. The program is being called the Wyoming Ag Ownership Network (WAGON).

Horse Slaughter

Sue Wallis said she is excited about some changes in the horse industry and gave some background. In 2007, the last three facilities were been closed. As a result, the only market left for unsound, unfit, and excess horses has been in Canada and Mexico. That market is only really available to those horses health enough to be trucked to those countries. Horse values have dropped dramatically. There are now an enormous number of horses being abandoned in various locations throughout the nation. She is involved in the nation-wide effort to work on the problems. Out of a meeting in the west, a new coalition was formed which includes several organizations. Cynthia Lummis serves on the Interior and Ag committees in DC and she is helping Sue with her efforts. The rider on the fee-based inspection is now removed due to her efforts. The bill will come out of the ag committee without the rider, but there will be fight on the floor in June. She commended our congressional delegation for their efforts and knowledge of the situation. She feels there are far worse fates than slaughter and she went on to say that their efforts are to change the current situation of horses starving.

She sees the rule on interstate transportation of meat as a huge breakthrough for horse slaughter. She sees this as an opportunity to have a facility in the state using state inspectors.

She also said there is new group formed called Unified Meats with a sub group specifically for horse slaughter. They are looking at processing 200 head of cattle, horses or bison in a plant they are hoping to have outside of Guernsey.

She also said the horse meat can be reintroduced as zoo meat and pet food. She said the have been working closely with the Indian tribes as advocates for horse slaughter, as the tribes are being overrun by wild horses.

The BLM has to by law, sell the excess wild horse population on BLM land. The Secretary of Interior has said they will administer a birth control on the mares.

The coalition is sending messages to their groups, so the education on the horse issues is prolific.

Unified Equine System

This is a program that brings in the horses for evaluation and if they are well trained and good health, the group would make them available to interested groups. Those that may need to be re-trained will go to the retraining part of their system. If horses come into the program that are in poor health, they will go into the program to help get them back to good health. Those that are just old, etc. would be sent out to pasture. Those horses that are un-trainable, etc. would then go to slaughter.

Interstate Shipment of Meat

Jason Fearnelyhough began the discussion by saying the WDA has not been allowed to do inspection which are legal for interstate shipment. A USDA inspection is required, of which Wyoming does not have one. WASDA and NASDA have fought for equal-to status for years. Foreign countries have that status for import to the USA. This new rule says there needs to be same-as status. Reality is that in

order to have same-as status, WDA, the lab in Laramie, etc. has to have USDA equipment, etc. in order to go forth with the process and these changes and additions are quite costly.

Linda Stratton said that same-as status is means that WDA would have the same equipment, laboratory, etc. Jason said there has been a lot of interest from producers to do state interstate shipment, but no plant has approached the WDA with the same interests. Linda said those plants that have in the past expressed interested in having their plant a federally inspected, have such strict protocol and hoops to jump through, they have chosen not to pursue the idea. There is interstate shipping of bison at this point.

Cindy Garretson-Weibel wanted to know if WDA would be able to say yes to the plan at any time or when WDA said not at this time, does that end the possibility. Jason said WDA did not close the door. Jason said there is an up-front cost to work on becoming same-as status. Jason talked about the possibility of putting a plant in the Big Horn Basin to accommodate the brucellosis infected cattle in the surveillance area. There is not currently any place for quarantined cattle to go. Cindy said the challenge with brucellosis is the perception of marketing this kind of product. She said they continue to work with producers by helping producers with marketing plans. She said until the money is there, it isn't going to happen.

The Powder River Basin Resource Council would like to continue trying to make these opportunities come to fruition allowing producers to be able to improve their outlets for their products.

Linda said they are working on the meat to schools, but most of Wyoming plants don't have the capacity to be able to provide much. She said that if we had a large plant in the state, we could increase using the meat processed for more schools.

The WBC chairman asked Cindy to take all the comments and see what they could do to help.

Branded Beef Product

Cindy and John Henn informed the group about David Fails from Cody who is interested in marketing a branded beef product in Wyoming. David has a marketing background, but little in marketing meat. John Henn said David's goal is to market Wyoming beef and the ranch where the animal is raised. He said the cattle are currently being fed in Torrington. Today he is processing the first 25 head in Pierce, Colorado. He is marketing the product to Food Services, and they will in turn market this to the retailers. He is working on the producers to be able to partake in the profits in the future. His goal is 750 animals, next year 4,000 head, and the following year 9,000 head. He is looking at 4-8 restaurants in the Cody area and probably promoting the product in Jackson in the winter. Cindy said this is an opportunity for Wyoming producers to participate and David will do the marketing.

The WBC feels the restriction put on by USDA is a marketing issue. They feel one entity cannot lock anyone out of the market. He says Wyoming's inspection is above and USDA's is below and should become another marketing tool.

John said the Wyoming Verified Program is in its sixth year. Japan's requirements were the reason this was born. The return is an average of nine dollars per head and the impact on Wyoming's economy is 1.3 million dollars.

Jason is the Executive of the Business Council Leaders of America. He wanted to thank the WBC for their help.

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned.

Attachments: Laramie County CD Water Quality Report Approval
Little Snake River CD Appointment
Application for Rangeland Health by Big Horn and Little Snake River Conservation
Districts
Attendance Sheet

Respectfully submitted,

Shaun Sims, President

Date